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Dinner With a Dash of Diplomacy

By Donnie Radcliffe

They had first met, Ezer Weizman said of Henry Kissinger, "15 years ago—before he was famous and before I was famous." And last night they met again.

This time, however, it was as Israel's minister of defense and the former U.S. secretary of state. And there wasn't any doubt in anybody's mind, there before dinner in the drawing room of the Israeli embassy, that fame had caught up with both.

Weizman, tall and commanding and sometimes called the architect of Israel's air force, swept into the room with all the dash of the glamorous flyboy he once was, penetrating small conversation groups where high-voltage participants included CIA Director Stansfield Turner, Sen. Jacob Javits (R-N.Y.), Sen. Richard Stone (D-Fla.), Rep. Jonathan B. Bingham (D-N.Y) and presidential counsel Robert Lipshutz.

Kissinger, tan and trim and sometimes called the architect of shuttle diplomacy, eased into the room with all the confidence of one who had done it before. Wolf Blitzer, the Washington correspondent for the Jerusalem Post who suggested to Egypt's Anwar Sadat the idea of direct contact with the Israelis, drifted toward Kissinger for an introduction. Kissinger was ready.

"There aren't that many former secretaries of state," said Kissinger, adding that in his own case he was a particularly "irresistible, infallible and humble" one and "I'm against personal diplomacy."

Predicting that differences in the Mideast situation would eventually be worked out "despite all appearances—a lot of it is verbal," Kissinger said he felt Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's original peace proposal was "a rather flexible one. In any negotiation there is a period of deadlock." Then, his face giving way to a grin, he said, "In my case I talked so much nobody realized it."

Barbara Walters arrived, giving Riuma Weizman a chance to see the famous face in the flesh ("it's always interesting," she said). Kissinger told Weizman that the first time Walters interviewed him "she spent 10 minutes explaining who I was, then asked me a question."

By Harry Naltchayan—The Washington Post

Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman, left, talks with Wolf Blitzer and Henry Kissinger at last night's dinner.

Uppermost in some minds, however, was how Weizman would respond to President Carter's call for a "comprehensive" settlement when they meet today at the White House.

"This mission of Weizman's is vital," said Sen. Stone. "If this visit goes well, next week's (by Begin) will go well. We'll know tomorrow."

Said Ilan Tehila, military aide to Weizman, "He will have the whole night to think about it."

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